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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000679

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: BAUCHI GOVERNOR DEFECTS TO PDP

REF: A. ABUJA 482
B. LAGOS 18
C. LAGOS 193
D. LAGOS 447

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter N.S. Pflaumer for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: On April 14, Bauchi State Governor Isa Yuguda formally defected from the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Others within the state's senior ANPP leadership did not attend Yuguda's formal registration with the PDP, signaling that they are not likely to follow him out of the party. Yuguda's defection came just three months after his marriage to President Yar'Adua's daughter. We understand that Yuguda, who was formally PDP before falling out with the party before the 2007 elections, has designs on federal office, like becoming Governor of the Central Bank (CBN), so the move to PDP is more likely for personal political gain than anything else. Although northern state governors Yuguda and Shinkafi both recently defected to the PDP (both after marrying one of Yar'Adua's daughters), the PDP has not actually gained in the overall number of gubernatorial seats it possesses, as it has also lost two governorships in the south (see refs B and D). These changes brings the total number of PDP governors to 26.
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On April 14, Bauchi State Governor Isa Yuguda formally defected from the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). His registration ceremony (an event which, by local custom, is usually accompanied by large public crowds and a public party at a large venue) was held at the PDP secretariat and was attended only by Secretary to the Government of the Federation Mahmud Yawle Ahmed, Minister of Police Affairs Ibrahim Yakubu Lame and other PDP leaders. Notably, the ANPP Deputy Governor and Speaker of the State House of Assembly, and ANPP members of both the House of Assembly and its representatives in the National Assembly were not present at the registration, which observers take as a sign that they are not likely to follow Yuguda's lead and switch to the PDP, despite his claims in the press that they will do so.

¶3. (C) Yuguda's defection has surprised few, given his personal history. Yuguda was previously a member of the PDP and served as both a Minister of State for Transport and

Minister of Aviation under the Obasanjo administration. After a falling out with former Bauchi State Governor Mu'azu (PDP) prevented him from becoming the PDP gubernatorial nominee in 2007, Yuguda switched to the ANPP, and was elected on its ticket. (Note: Mu'azu was known for being a very authoritarian leader and as a result Bauchi residents rebelled against the PDP in the 2007 elections. End Note).

¶4. (C) Comment: As a renewed member of the PDP, Yuguda may encounter difficulties in governing the state. The Bauchi State ANPP is strong, as it demonstrated in the 2007 election when it produced one of the only states with clear ANPP wins for a majority of state and local elections. If Yuguda continues to govern without making an issue out of party affiliation, then he may get through his term. But, if he tries to pressure those around him to defect as well, Yuguda may face impeachment, a not uncommon event in Nigeria. Even if the governor does manage to complete his term, Yuguda is on the rumored short list to become CBN governor when the current term of the incumbent expires on May 25, 2009. If this happens, which many believe was his driving reason for both marrying into the Yar'Adua family (as he now has four wives) and switching to the PDP, his potential difficulty in governing a prominent ANPP state becomes less relevant.

¶5. (C) Comment continued: While the PDP may be gaining power through marriages, it is losing power in re-run elections. Despite Yuguda and Zamfara Governor Shinkafi's recent defections to the PDP (both following their marriage to Yar'Adua's daughters), these two gubernatorial seats the ruling party has gained in the north have been offset by the

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two gubernatorial positions in the south it has lost. As well, the PDP is now in danger of losing a third seat in Ekiti (see ref C). We thus do not believe that the recent defections are indications that Nigeria is headed toward becoming a one-party state. If anything, Nigeria is once again simply proving that its political "parties" are more personality based than ideological and that they merely delineate the territory of godfathers and upcoming leaders rather than the ideology of politics. Moreover, we see a growing grassroots dissatisfaction with the PDP status quo. A new popular slang to say someone is acting foolishly is to say that he or she is "becoming PDP". End Comment.

¶6. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate Lagos.
SANDERS